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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

## **26-mile Veterans March to be held in September**

RAPID CITY, S.D. – The South Dakota National Guard’s Enlisted Association will host its Fifth Annual Black Hills Veterans Honor March on Saturday, Sept. 20, in the Northern Black Hills.

The 26.2-mile honor march pays tribute to the many sacrifices made by this nation’s veterans.

“The challenge of the march is rewarding to all who turn out,” said event coordinator Sgt. 1st Class Ted DeLoy. “You can not ask for a more perfect route than the Mickelson Trail.”

Marchers will start on the Mickelson Trail at the Rochford Trailhead and finish at the Deadwood Fairgrounds. The first half of this march will be uphill to Dumont, then, downhill to the finish line.

The estimated 150 marchers will take between six and eight hours to complete the course while averaging between three and four miles per hour.

Military entrants will be required to complete the march in uniform wearing combat boots. Some teams will be required to carry an additional 30-pound pack.

Not all participants are military service members as about 25 percent of the registered marchers are fellow citizens that want to show their support of veterans as well as enjoy a day walking along the Mickelson Trail.

“Last year, the weather was excellent,” said DeLoy. “It was certainly better than the snow of 2006.”

Interested participants and volunteers can register for the event by going to the Web site, <http://blackhillsveteranmarch.com> , or by contacting Sgt. 1st Class Ted DeLoy at (605) 366-7924.

**MEDIA** – Media are encouraged to participate in the event and/or capture the march from various sponsored rest stops along the route.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION**, please contact Sgt. 1<sup>st</sup> Class Ted DeLoy at (605)366-7924 or Maj. Orson Ward at (605) 737-6721, cell (605) 431-8753.

**NOTE:** Since the terrorist attacks on America, the South Dakota National Guard has mobilized more than 3,100 Soldiers and 1,000 Airmen in support of the Global War on Terror.

Currently, about 600 Soldiers and Airmen from the South Dakota National Guard remain on duty in Iraq, Afghanistan, and other locations throughout Southwest Asia. More than 3,600 National Guardsmen are available in South Dakota to provide support for state and national emergencies and homeland defense.